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RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0111
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 9905
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1820
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 DHAKA 001108

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [KDEM](#) [BG](#)
SUBJECT: COAS PLEDGES TO BLOCK IDP REGISTRATION; DGFI
PROMISES BROADER CT COOPERATION

REF: A. DHAKA 1078
[1](#)B. DHAKA 1037

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Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary:
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[1](#)1. (S) The Ambassador, on October 22, phoned Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Moeen Uddin Ahmed (then on an official visit to Pakistan) to convey deep concern about the Islamic Democratic Party's (IDP,s) attempt to register to participate in the 18 December parliamentary elections. Moeen promised to immediately do everything within his power to help address the issue. During an earlier, October 21 breakfast meeting with the Director General of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), Major General Golam Mohammad, the Ambassador told Mohammad in no uncertain terms the U.S. government did not support the creation of the IDP (which was formed earlier this year by senior members of Harakat ul-Jihad-Islami-Bangladesh (HUJI-B)). Mohammad noted the Ambassador's views on IDP and directed his note-taker to work with the Election Commission (EC) to ensure IDP's 20 October application to participate in the 18 December national elections was not approved. The Ambassador noted his dissatisfaction with DGFI's cooperation on regional terrorism issues; Mohammad promised to improve in this area.

Phone Call to COAS
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[1](#)2. (S) On the afternoon of October 22, the Ambassador called General Moeen who was on an official visit to Pakistan. The Ambassador told Moeen that he wanted to convey strong USG opposition to the creation of the IDP and the IDP's attempt to register to run in the upcoming elections. The Ambassador noted that registration of this party would be "dangerous" both for Bangladesh and the United States. (Note: The Election Commission was scheduled to rule on the IDP's application by October 30, before Moeen's projected return to Dhaka. End Note.) Moeen said he understood the seriousness of the issue. While noting that the Election Commission was an independent body, he promised to call Dhaka

immediately and do everything in his power to ensure the registration did not move forward.

Meeting with Director General of DGFI

13. (S) During the breakfast meeting at the Ambassador's Residence a day earlier, Mohammad asked the Ambassador for his assessment of IDP (which submitted an application to register for the 18 December parliamentary elections on 20 October). The Ambassador said he was appalled by IDP's creation and application to participate in upcoming elections. The Ambassador and RAO Counselor noted that due to IDP's close links to HUJI-B, there was a strong chance Washington would consider the IDP to be an alias for HUJI-B which could lead to the designation of the IDP as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). The Ambassador worried there could be consequences to the bilateral relationship if the IDP were allowed to move forward. Interestingly, Mohammad tried to distance himself from the formation of the IDP and without naming him directly, blamed former DGFI Brigadier General A.T.M. Amin for miscalculating in allowing HUJI-B to form a political party. Mohammad asked the Ambassador not to make his complaints about the IDP public. Mohammad said he understood the USG position and would attempt to block registration by the IDP.

Continued Support for the State of Emergency

14. (S) Mohammad sparred with the Ambassador on the necessity of maintaining the State of Emergency (SOE). Mohammad tried to make the case that it was only the SOE that had allowed Bangladesh to experience a relatively calm period since its implementation on 11 January 2007. Indeed, Mohammad said the SOE was required to prevent the political parties' "muscle men" and "black money" from creating an

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atmosphere of fear and intimidation. The Ambassador countered that Bangladeshi laws should be sufficient to prevent vote buying and thugs from influencing the elections.

The Ambassador reiterated the U.S. position that the SOE should be lifted before 18 December in order for the elections to be perceived as fully credible. Mohammad acknowledged the caretaker government would likely lift the SOE after the registration of candidates for parliament had been finalized (circa three weeks before 18 December).

Multiple Issues with BNP and AL Remain Unresolved

15. (S) Mohammad said that, at the end of the day, both the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) would participate in the 18 December elections. He assessed the BNP would keep everyone guessing about whether it would participate until the last minute. This was a BNP tactic to continue to extract concessions from the caretaker government. Regarding the Upazila (i.e., county) elections, Mohammad noted it was absolutely vital to have the elections held as soon as possible so newly elected parliamentarians would be unable to influence the process. While 24 and 28 December remained the scheduled dates for the Upazila elections, Mohammad conceded the dates were still up for negotiation and could slip.

Looking forward to Post-Election Period

16. (S) Mohammad noted that while stability and participation of all parties (minus the IDP) in the elections were important issues, he was looking beyond 18 December to the post election period. Mohammad and senior caretaker government advisers were working hard to bring the BNP and AL together so the two parties could agree on the following: the losing party on 18 December would act professionally and not

launch hartals (nationwide strikes) to protest their loss; the new Parliament would make permanent the 87 ordinances enacted by the caretaker government; the power of the President vis-a-vis the Prime Minister would somehow be increased; the new Parliament would establish a National Security Council as an advisory body to the Cabinet; and, the next political government would not seek retribution against the Army high command. (Note: Mohammad confided the AL had accepted the NSC as being in the national interest, but the BNP had not yet agreed. End Note.)

Promise of Improved Counterterrorism Cooperation
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17. (S/NF) The Ambassador told General Mohammad the USG was dissatisfied with DGFI cooperation against specific terrorist targets, particularly ones related to Pakistan-based groups. The Ambassador told him the USG wanted to see more from DGFI. General Mohammad promised "From today on, you will see improvement." Mohammad praised the incoming Director of DGFI's Counterterrorism Intelligence Bureau (CTIB), Brigadier General Emadul Hoque. Mohammad intimated that he had not had much control over CTIB when Amin was director, but now that Amin had moved to another unit, he could more effectively control CTIB through Emadul.

Comment
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18. (S) The very fact that the IDP moved ahead with filing papers to register for the upcoming elections suggests that COAS Moeen was not aware of our reservations about the move. Indeed, the Indian High Commissioner told the Ambassador on October 21 that General Amin had recently told him that the USG had chopped off on the creation and registration of the IDP. In any event, Moeen is now on notice regarding the USG position. We will see if he uses his influence with the Election Commission to keep the IDP from being registered. The pledge of enhanced DGFI cooperation on counter-terrorism is welcome. It was no secret that DG Mohammad felt undermined by his former subordinate's penchant for independent action. We will look for signs that Mohammad plans to fulfill his pledge to begin a new era of CT cooperation.

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Moriarty